Key Elements of the designation line within a Great Schools Policy
September 3, 2015

The Great Schools Policy is intended to outline how the District supports and holds accountable schools for meeting performance expectations, including a clear designation of when they are eligible for takeover by a new operator through a Public RFP process. The policy elements outlined below are focused on the criteria and process for that designation specifically.

Framing Statement: So as to advance (fundamental goals), this policy should (accomplish what). In order to do this well, it must be (key qualities), and provide guidance to (key stakeholders).

WHY: THE FUNDAMENTAL GOALS OF THE POLICY

• Strategy to help reach our Denver Plan 2020 goal of Great Schools in Every Neighborhood. This policy should facilitate DPS’ ability to reach our target of 80% Great Schools in Every Neighborhood

WHAT: THE POLICY SHOULD ACCOMPLISH

• Cultivate Trust
  o Use a transparent, public Request for Proposals (RFP) process to create new schools
  o Articulate a clear definition of “persistently low-performing school” and available interventions or actions to be taken prior to a school reaching the designation line

• Prompt Appropriate Responses to Persistent Low Performance:
  o Provide explicit timelines, metrics and processes for how persistently low performing schools (as defined by the SPF) will be supported, held accountable, and designated for the Call for New Quality Schools
  o Prompt consistent action with regard to our lowest performing schools
  o Articulate what defines a persistently low-performing school and what actions or interventions are triggered at what point in a school’s performance trajectory, including the line of designation for public RFP

• Grow the Pipeline of Quality Schools
  o Articulate a process for increasing the supply of high-quality internal and external providers
  o Incent and attract new schools creation
**HOW: KEY QUALITIES OF A POLICY**

- *Transparent and Predictable:* Includes identification of clear criteria; Communicated well and broadly to generate wide-spread understanding; Consistent in application and implementation

- *Evidence-Based:* Grounded in research about school improvement; Governance agnostic

- *Community Based:* Based on an inclusive process and responsive to the unique factors of a neighborhood; Reflects feedback from key stakeholders

- *Fair and Equitable:* Based on performance criteria that consider both status and proficiency and takes a school’s demographics into consideration; Sensitive and transparent in how quantitative and qualitative data are considered

- *Effective:* Timely, ensures there will be an strong supply of high quality schools

**WHO: KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

- Families of impacted students
- Impacted Students
- Principals and school leaders in impacted communities across governance type
- Teachers in impacted communities
- Central Office staff that provide school supports
- Elected Officials
- Broader Community